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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Identical letters dated 4 September 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write with regard to the highly alarming terrorist attacks carried out against Israel over the past few days by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip.

On Monday, 3 September 2007, a Qassam rocket fired by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip landed in a courtyard between a day-care centre and an elementary school in the southern Negev town of Sderot. Twelve children, who were en route to the aforementioned school, were treated for shock. The rocket was one of seven launched from the Gaza Strip early Monday morning; the other six rockets fell in open areas around the town, and one of them caused a small fire. On the previous day, Sunday, 1 September 2007, the first day that classes resumed, two Qassam rockets landed near a school in Sderot. It is only by miraculous chance that the schools were empty at the times of the attacks and no one was injured.

I must underscore that the recent terrorist attacks were carried out to coincide with the start of the new school year. Anxiety levels have been high in Sderot the entire summer, as the constant threat of more rockets continues to terrorize the civilian population. The relentless rocket attacks and the looming threat that another is on the way have created an intolerable humanitarian situation for the people of Sderot. Speaking to reporters following yesterday's attack, Batya Katar, a mother and leader of the Sderot Parents Association, grimly described the situation: "The school year is over. We cannot hold on anymore."

Israel views these terrorist attacks with grave severity, particularly since they occurred just as the school year was getting under way. The timing and location are clear indications that Palestinian terrorists launched the Qassam rockets with the explicit intention of killing and maiming the greatest possible number of Israeli civilians.

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Israel retains the right to act in self-defence, as is the right of all sovereign nations, under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Israel will continue to do all that is necessary to safeguard the lives of its citizens and ensure their right to live free from fear and terror.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 13 and 14, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Daniel **Carmon**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.